

The Stone and the River

by Rebecca D'Souza

Introduction

Brief Introduction

In 1997, Kuwait, I was born to a Mauritian mother and an Indian father. I completed my primary education in Kuwait before returning to Mauritius in 2009, where I then completed my secondary education. I earned a bachelor's degree in art history from The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Gujarat, India, in May 2021. By the end of 2021, I returned to Mauritius, and as from 2022 I worked as a teacher in primary schools, S.E.N.S. Busy Bees and Hampstead Junior School. Since January 2023 till present, I have been working as Project Lead at The Talent Factory, a public and media relations agency.

I led "Exploring Creativity through Poetry" for children aged 5-9, and teenagers aged 10-15, at Caudan Arts Centre in July and August 2024. Followed by a creative writing workshop for young adults aged 13-25 in February 2025 titled "Halfway down the river", during Caudan Arts Centre's Youth Arts Festival.

I am passionate about life-long learning, and I look forward to sharing my love for creativity and valorising the potential of the human imagination that is found in children and adults.

"Fostering creativity in children through poetry"

My strong urge to foster creativity in children through poetry is rooted in the belief that poetry offers an accessible avenue for self-expression, imagination, and emotional exploration. Poetry has the ability to transcend linguistic barriers, allowing children to communicate their thoughts and feelings in a way that is both liberating and empowering. Through the possibilities of language and the rhythm of verses, children can discover the joy of playing with words, painting vivid images with their thoughts, while expressing their emotions. Poetry, in other words, encourages curiosity, introspection, and a sense of wonder - qualities that are fundamental to a child's development. By engaging with the poetic process, children not only enhance their language skills but also cultivate a connection with their own creativity.

Objectives of the Workshop

- **Fosters meaningful connection** between caregiver and child by encouraging shared reflection, dialogue, and creative output throughout the workshop.
- **Strengthens emotional bonding** through collaborative writing activities that emphasise mutual understanding, empathy, and storytelling.
- **Encourages self-expression** by providing children and adults with a safe, supportive environment to voice their thoughts, emotions, and inner worlds.
- **Promotes co-creation** by guiding participants to build a single, unified narrative together—one that reflects the perspectives and contributions of both the adult and the child.
- **Explores creative potential** through hands-on engagement with metaphor, free verse, and letter writing—allowing participants to experiment with language, imagery, and form.

Workshop Overview

Time	Activity
10:00 - 10:10	Welcome & Introduction - Meet the teacher and participants - Introduction to “The Stone and the River” theme
10:10 - 10:30	Curve 1: Creative Writing The child (river) asks a question; the adult (stone) answers. – Begin building the narrative.
10:30 - 10:50	Curve 2: Free Verse Poem The child writes a poem to the adult. The adult supports and guides, learning about free verse.
10:50 - 11:00	Toilet & Snack Break
11:00 - 11:20	Curve 3: Letter Writing The adult writes a letter to the child with their input.
11:20 - 12:00	Curve 4: Story Completion & Sharing -Title page, dedication, complete your story. -Optional sharing time. -Homework: Foreword, Afterword, Blurb (explained during session). -QR code scan for teacher’s contact.

Note 1 | Number of participants per workshop: 10

Note 2 | Basic materials will be provided to all participants. However, adults are encouraged to bring any additional supplies they feel may enrich the creative process—particularly for illustration—ensuring that both adult and child have access to what they need.

Note 3 | During the designated break, it is the adult’s responsibility to accompany their child to the toilet and to provide them with a snack.

16 August

The Stone and the River

A Parent-Child Creative Writing Workshop

Date: Saturday 16 August 2025

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

For: Parents & children aged 6-10

Workshop Content

This 2-hour writing workshop invites children and their caregivers to **co-create a story** through writing activities inspired by the metaphor of the **stone (parent)** and the **river (child)**. Together, they will explore **three curves of a river**, each representing a distinct writing form: **creative writing, free verse poetry, and letter writing**.

The metaphor of the *stone and the river* reflects the **shared influence and emotional journey** between adult and child. As the river flows and the stone shifts, each transforms the other.

Writing Curves in Detail

Each “curve” of the workshop represents one part of a continuous story, unfolding through three forms of writing: creative prose, free verse poetry, and letter writing, before concluding with the completion and optional sharing of the story. Inspired by the metaphor of the “stone and the river,” the caregiver (stone) and child (river) explore how their lives shape and move one another. Across the three curves, each pair is guided by sensory prompts—a situation, a colour, an emotion, a word, and a sound—which they may incorporate into their narrative. The goal is for each duo to co-create a story that traces the stone’s journey through the river, as well as how the river flows around the stone; reflecting on the emotional and environmental shifts along the way, and how both the adult and child felt throughout this shared experience.

Curve 1: Creative Writing

The aim of this writing exercise is to strengthen the bond between adult and child by encouraging the child to explore their curiosity and ask a question that genuinely interests

them, with the adult responding thoughtfully in return. It is relatively simpler than the other exercises and serves as a gentle icebreaker into the writing process, allowing both adult and child to ease into co-creation and shared storytelling.

Curve 2: Free Verse Poem

- The child writes a poem to the adult with their help.
- **Free Verse Guidelines:**
 - No fixed meter or rhyme scheme

Free verse poems do not follow a set rhythm or rhyme pattern. Unlike traditional poetry, there is no need for lines to rhyme or follow a specific beat—allowing the writer to focus more on meaning and mood than on structure.

- Flexible line lengths

Lines in free verse can be as short or as long as needed. This flexibility allows writers to match the natural rhythm of thought or speech, and to emphasise particular ideas or emotions.

- Natural speech patterns

Free verse often sounds like everyday conversation. It allows the writer to use their own voice, making the poem feel more authentic, relatable, and emotionally honest.

- Creative use of punctuation & line breaks

Poets are encouraged to use punctuation and line breaks in unique ways. These choices can influence how the reader experiences the flow, pause, and meaning of the poem, adding depth and intentionality.

- Emphasis on imagery & emotion

Free verse relies heavily on vivid images and strong emotional expression. Writers are encouraged to paint pictures with words and explore how they feel, focusing on sensory details, metaphors, and personal experiences.

Curve 3: Letter Writing

- The adult writes a **letter to the child**, co-written and co-illustrated.
- Focus on comfort, love, encouragement.
- A chance for emotional storytelling.

This exercise is meant to stimulate warmth and clarity through co-writing, allowing adult and child to express themselves and connect through creativity and mutual understanding.

Curve 4: Story Completion & Sharing

- Create a **title page and dedication**.
- Assemble the 3 parts into a **complete story**.
- Time to present stories (optional).
- Homework: Add **foreword**, **afterword**, and **blurb** at home.

These elements will be clearly explained during the exercise. Toward the end of the session, adults will have the option to scan a QR code to access the teacher's contact details for any questions, feedback, or to share their completed work afterwards.

Takeaway

A **co-written storybook** by the caregiver and child titled "**The Stone and the River**"—a meaningful memory and a creative expression of their bond.

End of workshop

Note

The workshop concludes with duos being encouraged to share their work which aims at encouraging interaction amongst participants, and fostering an inclusive learning environment. Each duo contributes their share of creativity towards writing a story.

The content stated in this document will be simplified for the understanding of children aged 6 to 10 years of age.

Bring along

- Water / drinks
- Snacks

- Writing and illustration materials
- Whatever children would like to wear that makes them feel most comfortable and confident, or that leaves participants feeling like their favourite character. All characters, personalities, and moods are welcome.

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